

**WHEN WE THINK OF DRUGS, MOST OF US THINK OF MARIJUANA,  
HEROIN AND CRACK COCAINE.**

**BUT SOME OF THE MOST LETHAL DRUGS ARE SIMPLER  
AND EASIER TO OBTAIN.**

## **INHALANT ABUSE**

We can find them in the drawers of our desks, stashed in our cabinets, and lined up on our grocery store shelves. Things like paint, magic markers, white out, lighter fluid, hair sprays, vegetable cooking sprays and air fresheners. Things that are cheap and easy to obtain, and at the same time, when inhaled can prove fatal.

These and close to 1,000 other everyday household products are being abused by our kids to get a quick high. They inhale them through their nose or mouth. Most kids who try these products think they are harmless. They do not know the facts.

The reality is that hundreds of children each year die from inhalant use—sometimes on their first try. Nonetheless, many parents and educators remain ignorant of this “silent epidemic.”

**Inhalants are the third most abused substances among 12 to 14-year-olds in the United States, coming in right behind alcohol and tobacco.** And as many as one in five students in the United States has tried inhalants by the time they reach the seventh grade.

Yet while many kids admit to sniffing toxic items, they do not consider this to be “inhalant abuse.” That is because these products are easily available, free or inexpensive, legal and give a pleasurable affect by depressing the central nervous system.

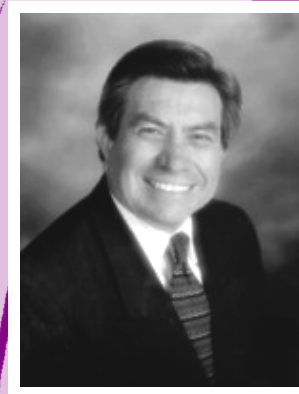
These inhalants are dangerous chemicals that are not intended for human consumption, and they do irreversible damage to the human body when misused.

People who abuse inhalants on a regular basis and do not die put themselves at risk for permanent and severe brain damage. Inhalant vapors react with fatty tissues in the brain, literally dissolving them. Therefore, chronic inhalant abusers may permanently lose the ability to perform everyday tasks like walking, talking and thinking.

That’s why we must warn our kids about the dangers of inhalants, and make sure that they know enough not to try them.

Please take the time to read the enclosed information about inhalant abuse and the real dangers to our children.

## **INHALANT ABUSE CAN KILL**



**Compliments of:  
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## Inhalants Deadly Effects

Extended use of inhalants can cause weight loss, fatigue and an electrolyte (salt) imbalance. Repeated use can permanently damage the nervous system, greatly reducing physical and mental abilities. Also, because inhalants are easily absorbed in the bloodstream and metabolized through the liver and kidneys, long-term sniffing can damage blood, bone marrow, the liver and the kidneys.

Deep breathing of vapors or extended use of inhalants during a short period of time may result in other serious effects such as losing self-control, violent behavior, unconsciousness or death. Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of solvents or aerosols can produce heart failure and instant death. High concentrations of inhalants can also cause death from suffocation by displacing the oxygen in the lungs. Inhalants can also depress the central nervous system so much that breath slows down until it stops.

## Inhalants Methods

### Sniffing

Breathing in the substance vapors through the nose. A child may sniff a container of white out, glue, paint thinner or gasoline to inhale the fumes through the nostrils.

### Huffing

Breathing in the substance vapors through the mouth. A child can spray paint on a handkerchief and hold it over his or her mouth and breath in the fumes.

### Bagging

Inhaling the vapors through a bag. A youth can spray fumes on a cloth or piece of clothing, then insert it into a plastic or paper bag to increase the concentration of the vapors. Then he or she puts the bag opening over the mouth or nose and breathes in. Some users may also place their heads directly inside the bag.

## What Can You Do to Help?

One of the most important steps you can take is to talk with your children or other youngsters about not experimenting even a first time with inhalants. In addition, talk with your children's teachers, guidance counselors, and coaches. By discussing this problem openly and stressing the devastating consequences of inhalant abuse, you can help prevent a tragedy.

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition  
1-800-269-4237  
or on the World Wide Web at:  
[www.inhalants.org](http://www.inhalants.org)

National Drug and Alcohol  
Treatment Referral Service  
1-800-662-HELP

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and  
Drug Information  
1-800-729-6686 or [www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

## What are the Symptoms?

**Don't overlook these symptoms, especially if they are chronic, in combination, or don't respond to medication:**

- ♦ red or runny nose
- ♦ sores or rash around the mouth and nose
- ♦ nausea and headaches
- ♦ chronic cough
- ♦ sudden memory loss or lack of concentration

### Also be on the lookout for:

- ♦ chemical smell on the breath, on clothes or in the bedroom
- ♦ paint stains on clothing and skin
- ♦ soda cans, rags, sandwich bags with a chemical smell

**Otherwise, many of the warning signs for inhalant abuse are the same as for any drug:**

- ♦ abrupt changes in schoolwork and attendance
  - ♦ changes in personal hygiene
  - ♦ extreme mood swings
  - ♦ red, irritated eyes
  - ♦ sudden weight loss
  - ♦ sudden loss of interest in friends, sports or hobbies

## What are Inhalants?

**Ordinary household products can be deadly in the hands of a teen determined to get high. The following are the most popular types of products abused.**

- ♦ Fabric protectors
- ♦ Nail polish remover with acetone or toluene
- ♦ Whippets (small canisters of nitrous oxide that propel whipped cream)
- ♦ Vegetable cooking sprays
- ♦ Liquid correction fluid
- ♦ Halon fire extinguishers
- ♦ Gasoline and propane fuel
- ♦ VCR head cleaner
- ♦ Spray paint
- ♦ Hair spray
- ♦ WD-40 (automotive)
- ♦ Felt tip markers
- ♦ Butane (including cigarette lighters)
- ♦ Air fresheners
- ♦ Lacquers
- ♦ Paint thinner
- ♦ Gumout (automotive)